## PRESS CONFERENCE:

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Samad[ph] Yusef[ph] from the Huriya Channel Halud[ph] Azerthi[ph] from Malaf Press Iyad[ph] from the Independent Press, IPA Joanna White from [Unintelligible] Security Monitor Ryan Lucas from the Associated Press Hamdani[ph] from Al Arabiya Newspaper Maliki[ph] from Sabah Newspaper

Unidentified reporter from the Los Angeles Times and other reporters not identified by name or press affiliation.

**REPORTERS 1-11** 

\*REP1 = REPORTER 1

\*INT = INTERPRETER

**BG PERKINS:** 

As-Salāmu 'Alaykum. Good afternoon to everyone. On behalf of the Multi-National Force – Iraq, I'd like to thank you for being with us here today. In the last 60 days, coalition and Iraqi forces detained 136 individuals who played key roles in al-Qaida in Iraq along with taking part in the network structures throughout Iraq as well as having several links to other places throughout the world. Three specific captures and kills continue to degrade the enemy organization. Last week, on the 11th of November, coalition forces killed a terrorist positively identified as Hajji Hammadi. Hammadi has been affiliated with al-Qaida in Iraq since its inception and, in 2004, became the emir of Karmah and Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad.

Hammadi was responsible for planning, conducting, and leading attacks against coalition forces, Iraqi forces, government officials, and Iraqi citizens. He was the mastermind of an attack on June 26th of this year against coalition forces and Iraqi government officials in Al Anbar Province. Hammadi escorted a suicide bomber, disguised as an Iraqi policeman, to the attack location and then videotaped the attack. This attack killed 20 Iraqi citizens including the mayor of Karmah and several sheiks as well as 3 United States Marines including a battalion commander, a junior Marine officer,

and an enlisted Marine. Hammadi has also been linked to multiple assassinations of Sons of Iraq leaders.

Hammadi's history of terrorist activity includes the abduction and murder of United States Army Staff Sergeant Matt Maupin in 2004. Staff Sergeant Maupin was assigned to the 724th Transportation Company, U.S. Army Reserve. Finally, Hammadi led a group of fighters against coalition forces in the second battle of Fallujah in late 2004. The removal of a cold-blooded killer of innocent Iraqis and U.S. service personnel will further degrade the ability of al-Qaida to carry out these ruthless attacks in Iraq.

I'm pleased today to have Colonel Todd McCaffrey, commander of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, with me today, who will describe the operation that took out Abu Ghazwan, a senior al-Qaida leader killed in a combined operation led by Iraqi Security Forces and Sons of Iraq, supported by coalition forces. Todd.

## COL McCAFFREY:

Good afternoon, sir. Thank you very much. My name is Todd McCaffrey. I command the 2nd Brigade of the Strykers up north of Taji. One of our areas of operation is Tarmiyah. Abu Ghazwan was a critical north belt emir for the al-Qaida network that operates on the north and western side of Baghdad. On November 6th, a joint

operation conducted by Sons of Iraq, operating with the Iraqi Army, and assisted by coalition forces discovered Abu Ghazwan in a hiding location just north of the town of Tarmiyah where he had been operating for the last two years, conducting numerous attacks against Iraqi civilians, coalition forces, and Iraqi Security Forces.

What made this operation unique was the intelligence that developed the operation was actually brought forth by the Sons of Iraq to the Iraqi Army. They initiated the operation for a cache search to look for weapons. And while conducting that operation and looking for that cache, they made contact with one individual who engaged the element. They returned fire and then continued to pursue another individual who was Abu Ghazwan. And the Sons of Iraq members involved in the operation actually killed Ghazwan at that time, brought his body back for positive identification both from biometrics (he had been detained before) and from visual identification by members of...in Tarmiyah.

So this was an ex-...really an excellent operation that we were very enthused about because the fact of the matter is this was, in fact, an SOI and Iraqi Army operation really through and through. What we found after the operation was a new...renewed confidence by the Sons of Iraq with the Iraqi Army—a great cooperative effort on the

part of these two elements that continue to operate very well in Tarmiyah and elsewhere in our area. But particularly, I think the important piece here is that Ghazwan, who is a critical al-Qaida leader, was turned over...the intelligence by the members of the Sons of Iraq, some of whom, in the past, had knowledge of his operation. And this cooperation between the Army and the SOI is, I think, really something we're very positive about and very, very enthusiastic about in what it means for the area. So again, we're pleased to have been able to support the Army and support the SOIs in their continued movement in Tarmiyah and elsewhere in our area as they continue to take the lead on security.

**BG PERKINS:** 

Thanks. Also, as recently released, coalition forces killed a terrorist positively identified as Abu Qaswarah, also known as Mohamed Mumu. Qaswarah had historic ties to al-Qaida in Iraq's founder, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and took the role of the senior al-Qaida in Iraq emir of Northern Iraq in June of 2007. He was responsible for organizing al-Qaida efforts including operations against Iraq and coalition forces in Mosul. He led the failed attempt to destroy the Mosul Civic Center during the holy month of Ramadan, an attack that could have killed hundreds of innocent Iraqis.

Prior to leading al-Qaida in Iraq, Qaswarah had several networks

located in Europe where he exercised historic ties in order to provide funds, logistics, and fighters to al-Qaida in Iraq. His death will significantly degrade al-Qaida's operations in Mosul, leaving the network without a leader to coordinate its efforts and temporarily reduce al-Qaida's ability to leverage European-based sources of funding.

We have all witnessed the significant decrease in violence throughout Iraq. Last year at this time, we were experiencing an average of nearly 180 attacks a day, and now we are down to about 20 attacks per day on average. In addition, the incidents of ethnosectarian violence have dramatically decreased. The improved security is largely due to the strong, strategic partnership between coalition and Iraqi forces, the courageous efforts of the Sons of Iraq as well as the will of the Iraqi people to reject extremists and continue the pressure to disrupt and dismantle al-Qaida in Iraq networks across the entire country of Iraq.

Let me close by saying that while we have achieved significant success in dismantling terrorist networks, the enemy is still capable of carrying out lethal attacks against the people of Iraq and will attempt to disrupt progress. We have confidence in the strength of our strategic partnership, the ever-increasing capability of the Iraqi

forces, and the perseverance of the Iraqi people. At this point, we'd be happy to take any of your questions. Sir.

REP1:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Good evening. Huriya Channel, Samad[ph] Yusef[ph]. General David, is Mr. Muqtada al-Sadr still have the same political and military capability that he had before the operations? My other question is, since Muqtada al-Sadr is opposing the SOFA and the presence of CF, is he causing any military threat when the U.S. military delivered those oppositions to Iraqi forces? My last question. These are threats by AQI. But what about threats by Sadr loyalists and followers?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, I think what's important to remember is the Government of Iraq, along with the Iraqi Security Forces and, probably most importantly, the people of Iraq, have rejected violence from all groups whether it's the terrorist group of al-Qaida in Iraq, special group criminals, other terrorists. Their desire to interrupt the peaceful transition of the country of Iraq, their desire to interrupt the progress toward democracy—that bankrupt philosophy has been rejected across the board. So any group, any element out there which is designed...which has designs on stopping the peaceful progress that the people of Iraq want so desperately, they are, in

fact, the enemies of the coalition, they are the enemies of the

Government of Iraq, and they are the enemies of the people of Iraq.

Those who want to take part in a peaceful, democratic process are

welcome by the people of Iraq. They want to exercise their right to

free speech. They want to exercise their right to have open and

peaceful debate in a democratic process. And that's what the

coalition forces along with the Iraqi Security Forces are partnering

to ensure: that the democratic process can move forward, that

people are able to debate their policy differences open and

peacefully, and that any group – a terrorist group or criminal group –

which wants to prevent that progress, in fact, will be the target of

both the coalition and the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security

Forces.

Yes, ma'am.

REP2:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Halud[ph] Azerthi[ph], Malaf Press. If the SOFA agreement was

signed and the coalition forces withdrew, do you think that al-Qaida

will return again?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, [coughs], excuse me. It's clear that the strategic relationship

that the coalition forces and the Government of Iraq have enjoyed these last five years have produced dramatic results. The results that I just discussed here today were the outcome of that strategic relationship. And both the coalition forces, the United States government, and the Government of Iraq are continuing to work

through the process to ensure this strategic relationship continues on

in the future.

And the agreement, as you know now, is moving through the democratic process of the Government of Iraq, it is working through their legislative process. And we are all confident that the negotiations of that agreement were based upon the mutually agreed upon premise that the sovereignty of both countries will be protected. And once approved, the agreement will be open and transparent for all to see and understand.

Sir.

REP3:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Iyad[ph] from the Independent Press, IPA. You've referred to one of the leaders of AQ had a relationship with European countries in Iraq. Does that mean that European countries have relationships or links to the al-Qaida and finance al-Qaida operations?

**BG PERKINS:** 

We have partnered greatly with the governments of the European countries to exchange information and intelligence as to the operations of al-Qaida. So what is clear is that al-Qaida is a worldwide network. Its strength comes from its ability to network with al-Qaida groups throughout the world to raise money, to produce fighters which are willing to travel from one part of the world to another. And so the fact that it is a global network requires global cooperation to interdict that network and pull apart its strength.

So we work very closely not only with European governments, but with countries throughout the world. And this cooperation is what allows us to gain the intelligence such that we can go after these al-Qaida leaders and pull them out of the network.

Ma'am.

REP4:

[Inaudible], the Los Angeles Times. I had a question about how the military goes around coming...goes about coming up with its casualty numbers in the attacks that take place, particularly in Baghdad. Lately I think most of the media here have been recipients of emails from the military insinuating that the Iraqi sources that we

use are exaggerating numbers. So all of us have the same question: How does the U.S. military come up with its numbers because so often they are drastically different than the Iraqi numbers, and how are we supposed to know which is the correct number?

**BG PERKINS:** 

As you can imagine, [coughs], when there is a...especially a dramatically large attack or suicide event, getting exact casualty numbers is a priority for everyone and it's a confusing situation. So what we do is our operational units, who are responsible for the area where the event occurs, work very closely with their units that are out in the field as well as Iraqi authorities to include the Iraqi police and the Iraqi military units there, and develop these numbers. And, as you can imagine, they progress throughout the day, for instance, of an attack as you get initial estimates and then we then take those estimates and bounce them off other authoritative sources to see what their estimates are and check with hospitals, morgues, et cetera.

So it is a dynamic process that we spend quite a bit of time crossqueuing our numbers with a number of agencies to come up with what we think are the most accurate numbers by taking a lot of different sources—and we use sources that can be confirmed in more than one way. REP4:

So then how does one explain the vast disparities? It seems like...I mean we had one day of...not long ago where the U.S. military said 5 people were killed in the incident and Iraqi officials that the media were dealing with were saying 28 to 31 were killed. Later that week, we had a similar situation. And the number...the gaps are just so vast that, you know, it kind of leaves everybody scratching their head. Who do you believe? How do you explain the vast disparity?

**BG PERKINS:** 

What we find is, in many attacks, the initial numbers, especially if they are from a single source, may not be the most accurate numbers. And so even when we get operational numbers from a single source, what we want to do is we want to cross-queue them with multiple sources to, in fact, when a number is put out, we are fairly sure that that is accurate. So that takes a certain amount of time.

So I think it's understandable that from the time an event occurs, as the day goes by, the numbers will continue to possibly change as we validate numbers, cross-queue them with other sources, and therefore, generally speaking, we have found in most instances the first number that comes out, especially if it's from a single source, may, in fact, be less accurate than one that comes out later which has been able to be cross-referenced with many different sources, and come to what we think is the best estimate of the true nature of that event.

Ma'am.

REP5:

Hi. Joanna White from [Unintelligible] Security Monitor. Please, may I ask a further question about Abu Qaswarah and were there any more details available regarding his ties to Europe and what he was receiving from Europe?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, [coughs], as we said earlier, one of his responsibilities as the leader here was he was intimately involved in running the network of al-Qaida. And what that network primarily did was provide financing from outside Iraq into Iraq, foreign fighters, as well as technology and information on, for instance, ways to build suicide devices. So he would get that information literally from around the world. And again, that has been one of the strengths of al-Qaida is it is a worldwide networked information. We know that quite a bit of that information, quite a bit of the financial resources, in fact, come from Europe. And again, he was a main conduit into Iraq for that as well as from this region.

And so by pulling him out of the network, what you take...what you

have done is take sort of a hub away from the wheel so that all of

these various means of supplying resources, means of supplying

foreign terrorists into Iraq is taken out, the coordination is gone, and

it dramatically cuts down on the resources available to the terrorists

who are here in Iraq to conduct their activities. So it's a major way

that we go after al-Qaida in Iraq is to go after the network itself and

the key pieces of that network which render the remaining parts of

the network much less capable.

REP5:

May I please just ask a quick follow up? Regarding the sources in

Europe, is it possible to get any specifics?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, as I said, we work very closely with a number of intelligence

agencies from around the world because they realize the threat that

al-Qaida poses globally. And we work with them on a routine basis

to develop the information which leads us to captures such as

Qaswarah.

Sir.

REP6:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

The U.S. military have...does the U.S. military have any indications about countries that support al-Qaida and which countries are those?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, again, the strength of the global effort against al-Qaida has been the cooperation with countries and intelligence agencies throughout the world. So we enjoy a large degree of cooperation from our partners globally and it has allowed us to interdict these many sources of support into Iraq as well as some support that flows from Iraq to other parts of the world. So again, we enjoy a large amount of cooperation from a number of countries with regards to getting after the network that al-Qaida uses to conduct its terrorist attacks.

Sir.

**REP7:** 

Ryan Lucas, Associated Press. What is the U.S. doing now and what is it going to do in the next couple of weeks to prepare to pull back to bases come June, 2009? And when that happens, will they still be performing patrols come June, July, August, 2009? And what will happen to the MIT teams and the others that are working with the Iraqis?

**BG PERKINS:** 

What is important to remember is that we currently have a mission right now and we are continuing to execute that mission which has resulted in a lot of the effects that I've just discussed here. As you know, we are in a process of, as we speak right now, readjusting forces on the ground. The last of our surge brigades returned at the end of the summer. We'll be reducing our force present here in Iraq by an additional 8,000 at the end of January.

So we are readjusting our forces on the ground. And General Odierno and his subordinate commanders are in a period of assessment. They're in a period of assessment to see what the effect is going to be here in Iraq as we continue to decrease our forces, as we continue to move our forces around. And after that period of assessment – taking a look at the conditions on the ground, taking a look at the recommendations of subordinate commanders, General Odierno will go back to his chain of command and give recommendations both to the disposition of the forces as well as to the size of the force.

So this is a continual process of making adjustments, doing an assessment after the adjustment because not only is it critical what we do, but it is critical to see how the enemy may react to our readjustment on the ground. And so there are a lot of unknowns. So

we take this a step at a time in a very methodical approach which

has worked very well as you've seen and we've experienced with

the return of the surge forces. Even as we've continued to return

forces after the surge, continued to return forces beyond that, the

level of violence continues to go down, progress in economic as

well as the political realms continue to increase.

So we go about this in a very deliberate manner. We got about it on

an assessment-based process, looking at what's going on on the

ground. And we continually make recommendations up the chain of

command and work with those who make the policy to make sure

that we move forward in a manner which allows us not to lose any

of the gains that we've made.

Sir.

REP8:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Hamdani[ph] from Al Arabiya Newspaper. The attacks, the

explosions are mainly from modern weapons. Where do they get

those weapons from and how do they get them delivered?

**BG PERKINS:** 

A great example of how networks are used. The accelerants—a lot

of these explosives can be brought into Iraq. A lot of them are

manufactured here in Iraq through knowledge that is brought in outside the country. Finances are brought in from outside the country as well as internally. What we are finding is that as we have success against the network here at al-Qaida, it dramatically reduces the aid and assistance from outside Iraq. So you have a dramatic reduction in foreign fighters, you have a dramatic reduction in technical know-how.

How we are seeing that manifested is by the fact that the attacks we are seeing, while still very cold-blooded and very lethal, are producing much fewer casualties than they were a year ago. Generally speaking, their method of attack is much less sophisticated. And you're seeing that the people who conduct the attacks, the people who are used as the suicide victims, quite honestly, are from some of the most vulnerable people in Iraq: widows and children. So the fact that al-Qaida is having to turn internally to Iraq, the fact that they are having to exploit the most vulnerable members of the country of Iraq, shows the effect of which the attack against the networks are paying off and, again, contributes to the dramatic reduction in violence we've seen.

But again, we still have to persevere against it because al-Qaida is intent on making up any losses it's had and continuing to show that it has a viable capability here in Iraq. But we have seen a dramatic reduction in the amount of explosives, the technical ability of those who make the explosives, as well as where the suicide perpetrators are coming from.

Ma'am.

REP9:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Al-Qaida's been eliminated in many places and networks. Can you assess how many, what ties in al-Qaida is still remaining in Iraq?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, as you said, there has been dramatic reduction in al-Qaida's presence. Some of the things that have been most dramatic with regards to al-Qaida's ability to operate is we have taken away a lot of the freedom to maneuver. They used to have much larger areas that they could operate in unopposed. Many of those areas have been taken away from them so they have much less freedom of action. We have taken apart key leaders of the network which I have discussed here earlier. And so the ability to move resources around Iraq, the ability to take resources from outside the country and bring them in has been dramatically reduced. And they are having to operate in much smaller cells, much less capable cells. And, therefore, it is much more difficult for them to mount large

numbers of attacks and it is much more difficult for them to mount attacks that create large numbers of casualties.

I think another indicator of the progress that has been made against al-Qaida is you see they generally attack very vulnerable targets. It is getting more and more difficult for them to attack hardened targets. Again, they take advantage of the most vulnerable parts of society – large groups of civilians, markets, things such as this. They co-opt and use the most vulnerable members of society. And again, they are doing whatever they can to basically inflict terror on the Iraqi people to take away their hope.

The good news is the Iraqi people, you can see it across the country, are universally rejecting this. They are coming together after an attack versus breaking up into ethnosectarian sects which then commit violence against each other. And they realize that al-Qaida is intent on stopping any type of progress in Iraq. You can see that whether there is political progress, economic progress, security progress, whatever is a symbol of progress becomes a target for al-Qaida.

Ma'am.

**REP10:** 

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

My name is Maliki[ph] from Sabah Newspaper. Why does Iran want to intervene in the SOFA between Iraq and the U.S. and want to impose its opinion in Iraq?

**BG PERKINS:** 

Well, the prime minister as well as the Iraqi people have made it very clear that they want a normal, bilateral relationship with Iran. They want a relationship where their pilgrims are welcome here in Iraq. They want a relationship where there's a free flow of commerce back and forth.

What they don't want are methods of destruction – bombs, accelerants – coming from Iran. They don't want foreign-trained terrorists coming from Iran. And they don't want interference into their sovereign decision making from any external country. And they've been very clear about that. Just as any country in the world, when they are involved in a bilateral discussion such as the United States and Iraq are involved in right now, both countries want to work that through their own processes, through their own democratic processes, and they do not welcome exterior influence by any other country. The United States does not welcome exterior influence into its sovereign, bilateral negotiations just as the country of Iraq does not welcome external interference in its sovereign,

bilateral negotiations. And I think the Government of Iraq has been very clear about that.

Ma'am

REP4:

How much of the decline in violence that you've cited would you attribute to a supposed change in Iranian tactics, not meddling as the United States has accused Iran of doing when violence has been at its height. And also, could you tell us more about the alleged Al Quds member that was supposed to have been arrested recently? Thank you.

**BG PERKINS:** 

[Coughs]. First question. The violence that Iraq was experiencing, especially a year ago, was a very complicated situation and there were many factors for it. Therefore, the solution is a very complicated solution. And it is a...and it is due to a number of factors.

Obviously the surge in U.S. forces was significant. It's important to remember though that as we surged our forces, the Iraqi Security Forces surged the number of Iraqi security forces. Not only did they surge the number of Iraqi Security Forces, they also increased greatly their capability as their training was increased along with

their size. In conjunction with that, you had the Awakening occurring, the Sons of Iraq standing up, making a deliberate decision to stand with their country and protect them. As well as other reconciliation that went on across Iraq.

So as the Iraqis came together and uniformly rejected al-Qaida, special group criminals, any other terrorist networks and partnered with the coalition forces, that synergy that we experienced by all those forces coming together, paid off with a dramatic decrease in violence that we are all enjoying here today. So there is not one answer to the solution which, again, is why we consistently say the strength of the strategic partnership that the coalition has had with the Iraqi people, the Iraqi government, and the Iraqi Security Forces, has been one that has produced these significant gains.

We have seen a large gain with regards to the number of Iraqi citizens which will go and report terrorist activities to their security forces, to coalition security forces, to the Iraqi police because they are now confident that they can report terrorist locations, terrorist activities and not suffer retribution. So the fact that we just get more information from the people of Iraq themselves is another major component, but it is another result of an increase in confidence in their own security forces as well as their method of government.

So again, a very complicated process. Many pieces come together.

But again, it is a combination of this strategy that has been put

together that has accounted for the success we've seen.

With regards to the Al Quds officer, he was [coughs] detained at the

BIAP Airport by Iraqi Security Forces. He was questioned for a

short period of time and the Iraqi government is now in control of

him. And it will be a sovereign decision on the Government of Iraq

as to what they decide to do with the Al Quds Force officer that the

Iraqi Security Forces detained.

Ma'am.

REP5:

Regarding the magnet bombs, are those seen as a response to

literally less resources and less munitions being available inside the

country, less access to explosives or as a more convenient way to

attack targets such as Sons of Iraq as a direct target? And as a

follow up to that, could I please ask whether any numbers or

percentages are available of the increase in the use of these devices

since, say, January 'til now, please?

**BG PERKINS:** 

You said the sticky bombs?

REP5:

Yes.

**BG PERKINS:** 

Yeah. I think it's probably both aspects that you mentioned are true. We are seeing them used in a targeted manner on, generally, leaders. Again, typical; they are going after people that they see are representatives of progress in Iraq. So judges, legislative leaders, leaders of the Government of Iraq that are working with all Iraqis, that are working toward reconciliation, that are working towards standing up the rule of law, that are working towards furthering the democratic process, those types people...those people are threats to al-Qaida. And, therefore, they are...it is a way for them to target those people. Again, [coughs], indicative of what they are trying to prevent which is progress. So I think it is a manner in which they can target specific people who are working for progress in Iraq.

And it also, as you can see and as you stated, there are much fewer of these very large explosives, very large events with very complicated IED-type producing things such as some of the more sophisticated vehicles we've seen. So it is also a way to take a constrained resource and target against somebody who represents progress. So I think it's a combination of them both.

REP5:

I'm sorry. There was a follow up on that one was whether any numbers were available, please, regarding, you know, whether there's been, say, a 50% increase this year or a 20% increase?

**BG PERKINS:** 

We'll get you some specific analysis on that...

REP5:

Thank you.

**BG PERKINS:** 

...so you can have the exact numbers.

Other questions? Well.... Sir.

**REP11:** 

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT:

Can you please introduce us to the operations of al-Qaida? Is it still continuous with other countries? Because there are some infiltrators coming into Iraq. There are many politicians in Iraq say that there are sleeping cells of al-Qaida. Do you have any information about those cells that are present in Baghdad or in other provinces? Thank you so much.

**BG PERKINS:** 

Obviously there are still al-Qaida present here in Iraq. As we see, unfortunately, almost every day there is an attack which has signature al-Qaida elements to it. So there still are a number of cells

throughout Iraq.

And we are working very closely with the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi people to find out where these cells are, to disrupt them and, again, to interdict the networks which support them. So it is a daily event. We are constantly going after al-Qaida as well as special groups criminals and, again, as well as any other terrorist organization that has operations throughout the country of Iraq. And we use the intelligence that we gain from coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces and, as I said, the people of Iraq themselves who have rejected these terrorists provide us invaluable intelligence as to where these cells are, where they operate, and when they start to move in neighborhoods. Because we know areas that they have lost control of, they continually try to come back in and gain control. So it is something that we are persistent about every single day, going after these cells.

Well, again, I would like to thank you all today for taking the time out and getting an update as to what the coalition force is doing in partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces, and the Government of Iraq. And wish you all a good afternoon. Thank you.